

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

State of the County Address

Wyandanch Memorial High School
January 24, 2005

Introduction and Overview

Thank you, Presiding Officer Caracappa, members of the Legislature, and everyone who has joined us today as we reflect upon the past year and the challenges that await us in 2005. Special thanks go out to the hundreds of government employees and First Responder volunteers who helped us safely weather the severe storm we experienced this weekend.

I want to thank Joe and the Legislature for accommodating my request to meet here at Wyandanch High School. This forum was chosen to let the people of Wyandanch, and the people of all of our diverse communities throughout Suffolk, know that your concerns and issues are as important as those of any other community.

One year ago we were informed by both the prior administration and our budget transition team that the County faced a very serious potential budget shortfall due to a confluence of negative economic factors. We had an open space program that was stagnant, thereby threatening our ability to win the race against overdevelopment. Our affordable housing shortage was denying opportunity to thousands. And the public wanted us to professionalize our government to the greatest extent possible. In short, the State of our County's finances, environment and public confidence were all in doubt.

But one year later, thanks to aggressive, proactive and innovative measures taken by this county government, we can proudly say that the state of Suffolk County is strong. We are more fiscally sound; we are more environmentally sound, and we have taken measures to make this county more affordable. We have followed sound management initiatives that have

professionalized our government, and have bolstered the public's faith in the government that serves them.

How do we know we've been successful? The facts speak for themselves. Things that should be going up, such as environmental preservation, affordable housing and our bond outlook, are indeed going up. And things that should be going down, such as our crime rate and our general fund taxes, are indeed going down. By acting decisively we took a potential shortfall of more than \$200 million and converted it into a balanced budget that actually lowered our general fund property taxes by 2%. We even kept the police district fund within our tax cap parameters for the first time in five years.

The number of acres of open space and farmland that we have closed on or reached agreement upon last year was three times the acreage that was closed upon the year before. The innovations we have implemented in the police department helped cut major crime by more than 9% and we have identified numerous parcels for potential affordable housing, smart growth developments.

Implementing Smart Government Principles

These good things did not happen by chance. They happened because we adopted smart government principles that emphasize common sense over partisan ideology. Smart government innovation allows us to do more with less and, in some cases, actually increase services while decreasing costs. For instance, we budgeted more nurses to help lower the county's infant mortality rate, especially among minorities. This enhances a woman's access to care while simultaneously lowering the costs associated with high-risk pregnancies. Smart government is about our initiative to *help* troubled youth rather than having them institutionalized, which can cost up to \$200 thousand per year per child. Smart growth incorporates my idea to give property tax cuts to our volunteer fire and ambulance workers in order to preserve our volunteer forces and avoid the massive tax increases that would be associated with paid departments.

Smart government maximizes the benefits of technology. We saved money by ending the practice of printing hundreds of our lengthy budgets and instead put them online so that they are easily reproduced and readily accessible to the public. Smart government initiatives have led to the auction of surplus computers, furniture and other property that had been sitting in the basements of County buildings collecting dust. Smart government takes county vehicles from those who use them just for commuting, and reassigns them as pool vehicles for rank and file employees who need them to conduct County business. And this was especially significant this past weekend when we had 14 four-wheel drive vehicles available for our snow response team.

Previously, these SUVs were in the driveways of the politically connected. Smart government is the notion that a County Executive can drive *himself* to work – saving the taxpayers nearly \$500,000 a year for chauffeurs. We thank the hard working employees of Suffolk County, without whom we would not have been able to implement these smart government principles.

These smart government initiatives were created in part thanks to the new management team we established in the budget office. Our talented budget staff is no longer merely crunching numbers. Now they carefully analyze every line item in the budget for maximum efficiency. Our management team is comprised of nonpartisan professionals.

This expertise was especially valuable in helping me craft what became the largest budget reduction bill in the county's history. Together, in bipartisan fashion, we cut more than \$128 million from the budget, without cutting services. This was the cushion we needed to bring in a budget that actually cut general fund taxes for 2005.

Late last year it was not looking as though such a tax cut was possible. Mandated Medicaid and pension costs continued to skyrocket. Mandatory police arbitration awards and health care costs were rising astronomically, and the \$60 million in one shots used in the previous budget would not be recurring. This was not some exaggerated or manufactured "Chicken Little" story. Our nonpartisan finance director, Fred Pollert, conceded that it was the worst looking fiscal scenario he had seen in 30 years, and the Legislature's budget office's worst case scenario mirrored his analysis.

We can be very proud that we balanced our budget without tapping our reserve funds; without raising fees; without utilizing one-shot, or non-recurring, revenues; and without resorting to any fiscal gimmicks. We even created a new pension reserve fund to deal with the state mandated pension costs.

But we're not out of the woods yet. We must do everything we can to ensure stability of the tax rates in Suffolk County. It is simply too expensive to live here on the Island. While our County tax rate is stable this year, some school districts levied double-digit increases. We cannot control other levels of government, so we must lead by example and keep County taxes as low as possible.

Fiscal Discipline Required

This is why we introduced a capital budget in 2004 that was smaller than the year before. We introduced a college budget with no increase to the county share, and we introduced an operating budget that cut general fund taxes.

The message I sent in those budgets will be the message that I will present in future years—we can't have it all. This county must exercise fiscal discipline. Too many politicians find it too easy to tax and spend. Unfortunately, far more find it even easier to *borrow* and spend. The bottom line is this—you shouldn't spend what you don't have. I ask the Legislature to join me in the spirit of cooperation to place the interests of the taxpayer over that of ideology, parochialism or partisan politics. If we want to add spending in one part of the budget, we should find areas of lesser priority to remove in other parts of the budget. Government has to stop thinking it can always go back to the taxpayer as a bottomless pit.

While over the last several years the police district fund has grown exponentially, we brought in a police district budget within the tax cap parameters. The ability to do this in the future will not be easy. The mandatory salary arbitration awards that we inherited will contribute to a \$35 million increase in expenses in the police district in each of the next two years. This is money that must be found each year just to keep services at current levels. There are only two ways to cover these rising costs--raising taxes or implementing more efficiencies.

Successes in Lowering Crime

Thanks to our innovative Police Commissioner, Richard Dormer, whom we affectionately call "Dormer, the Reformer," we have implemented many efficiencies that have actually increased coverage while controlling costs. As great as our police department was, we made it even better, thanks to the help of our highly effective and highly motivated officers. We introduced innovations last year including the creation of new anti-gang and undercover narcotics units, in coordination with District Attorney Tom Spota's office, which helped reduce major crimes by an astounding 9.2 % in 2004.

Scheduling changes enacted by Commissioner Dormer last year have already produced results. To paraphrase the Commissioner, when you own a deli, you don't assign all your people evenly throughout the day. You assign more to the lunch hour than at three o'clock in the afternoon. We must continue to place as many of our officers as possible on street patrol where they're needed most.

We must continue implementing even more reforms next year. This means taking on sacred cows. This means implementing our plan to civilianize up to 100 positions in the police department. This means using retired officers to lower the costs of school-based programs and asking police administrators to chip in with patrol.

New 311 System

We will also explore the possibility of implementing a new 311 non-emergency hotline to avoid waste and delays in response time that can cost lives. This is a proposal I first introduced as a legislator in 1996. This line can handle quality of life complaints such as loud barking dogs or rowdy youngsters and free up “911” for true life and death emergencies. A five-member panel that I will be creating will report to me by June on how this concept can be suitably implemented.

Combating Gang Violence

The time and money we save from these initiatives will help us confront a growing concern in suburbs throughout the nation - the growth in gangs. Gang activity is no longer confined to urban areas. As with organized crime, we are employing elaborate surveillance techniques, and infiltration, combined with harsh sentencing to fight gang activity. We simply will not allow gangs to take control of our neighborhoods and schools. I am happy to report that since our new anti-gang unit was deployed to Huntington Station, crime in that hamlet is down dramatically. We’ve done the same on Straight Path here in Wyandanch and we will do the same in any other community in need.

But combating gangs cannot be accomplished solely through stricter law enforcement. We therefore are creating a new gang-aversion program called Suffolk Neighborhoods Against Gangs, which is modeled after a successful program in Boston that offers vulnerable young people constructive alternatives to gang life. Our police department will host informational seminars with school officials, community groups and religious leaders to talk about how we can work together to give our kids positive recreational outlets and leverage our ability to obtain grants for these important programs.

Preserving our Precious Environment

While crime is down, environmental protection is up – way up, and we must ensure that this trend continues. Together, we revitalized a dormant open-space program; created a master list of 5,000 acres that we are seeking to preserve; increased both the number of attorneys and appraisers in the program; and approved a \$75 million bond for open space and farmland preservation that was overwhelmingly supported by the people of this County. All of these triumphs were true bipartisan efforts and I thank the legislators for all their hard work in seeing them through.

But our environmental triumphs were not limited to open-space preservation. We embarked on landmark efforts to revitalize our shellfishing industry, once a bedrock of our local

economy. We have partnered with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and Southampton College to help bring back scallops in the Peconic Estuary and we are working in tandem with the Nature Conservancy to do the same with clams in the Great South Bay.

And we have also initiated an innovative program to provide incentives for residents to remove underground oil tanks that are leaking fuel into our aquifer.

Additionally we have begun to evaluate the effects that our environment may have on our health. The question remains whether the environment is a factor in the high cancer rates that we have on Long Island. The State began years ago to investigate this matter but the research was never properly evaluated. The Cancer Awareness Task Force that I created last year has been meeting to evaluate whether any links may exist between the environment and these cancer clusters. By the end of the year, thanks to the hard work of this task force and our new Division of Cancer Awareness, we will be coordinating with local hospitals to create a standardized method of collecting data and recording information about cancer diagnoses, so we'll be better able to pinpoint the location of cancer clusters.

In order to make sure our environment is as safe as possible, we will continue our efforts to mitigate the use of pesticides in Suffolk County. We are already implementing a policy that has significantly reduced pesticide use and insures that only the safest mosquito control methods are used. Machine ditching was once considered the preferred method of controlling mosquitoes, but new data shows that in many areas it actually made the mosquito problem worse and helped to destroy many of our wetlands. I am therefore announcing today that in 2005 there will be no machine ditching in any wetlands in Suffolk County.

Also in 2005, we will launch an initiative to identify and restore our marsh wetlands that should actually greatly reduce or eliminate the need to use pesticides in these areas to control mosquitoes. It's time to recapture and restore these environmentally-important and productive ecosystems, and, by introducing more natural predators of the mosquito in these marshes, we will improve the fight against the health risks associated with mosquitoes.

Providing Workforce Housing

One of the reasons we have been so successful on the environmental front is the partnership we have forged between the environmental and business communities. It is no longer a common belief that protecting the environment and providing for economic growth and affordable housing are mutually exclusive issues.

The baby-boom generation had ample opportunity to experience the American dream in Suffolk County. Unfortunately, the upcoming generation does not have that same level of

opportunity. The Long Island Index notes that 47% of our population on Long Island does not have adequate means to buy a house today in this area. So many of our young people are just giving up and leaving for cheaper pastures elsewhere. Grandparents are robbed of the opportunity of seeing their grandchildren grow up. Companies lack skilled employees. And we created an outstanding school system only to see students go away to college and never come back. We need to create more workforce housing not just because it is the right thing to do, but because it is the smart thing to do for the long-term economic health of Suffolk County.

Speaking of people we'd like to see settle down here, this year Suffolk again was the envy of counties all around the nation by having 26 of our students qualify as semi-finalists for the coveted Intel Science awards. We have some of these outstanding students with us today. Please recognize them with me. Let's do our best to entice these talented young men and women to live, work, and raise families here in this great County.

I promised last year that this administration would take a very aggressive approach to the creation of workforce housing--and we have. Our Workforce Housing Commission, led by Jim Morgo, worked with local municipalities, builders, environmentalists and civic leaders to identify numerous locations where workforce housing can be built. We have worked with the towns to expedite permits and have allocated \$15 million for infrastructure improvements to entice developers to build more workforce housing as opposed to more strip malls.

One of the commission's key suggestions was to incorporate the transfer of development rights into the next environmental bond act. The result was landmark legislation which this Legislature passed unanimously. The legislation will actually decrease pressure to develop our environmentally sensitive land because development rights can be transferred to the abandoned warehouses, strip malls, and other eyesores within our communities. It is truly the best of both worlds.

The very first parcel we have committed to is 75-units of workforce housing on 7 acres in Patchogue. It is the site of the old Rialto Theater where I used to watch matinees as a kid. The theater burned down more than 25 years ago and has been an abandoned eyesore ever since. But now this and other contiguous parcels will breathe new life and new revenue into the area. The Village zoned the site with the appropriate density and the County will expedite permits and contribute to the sewer and water line hookups.

Cleaning up County Airport, Lobbying to Save the Air Guard

We recognize that the way to attract and retain business is through incentives. Thus we will aggressively market the five county empire zones that we have in Suffolk. One is located at

the County's Gabreski Airport in Westhampton, which we believe has incredible untapped potential for economic growth consistent with the local environment. Within the next month I will be issuing a request for proposals to the business community to determine the most appropriate development of this economic zone. I have committed several million dollars in infrastructure improvements as incentives to those businesses that want to locate here.

But before we could even market the airport, we first had to clean up the mess that was left behind due to the lack of proper management. So we hired a professional airport manager, collected more than 100,000 dollars in back rent and, through a far more aggressive fee collection effort, generated more than 200,000 dollars in landing fees last year compared to less than 2,000 dollars collected the year before, all without increasing airport operations over 2002 levels.

And you can't discuss Gabreski Airport without mentioning the 106th Air National Guard Rescue Wing, which performs invaluable rescue services and contributes more than 1,200 jobs to the local economy. As we all know, this base is threatened with closure. To show the federal government how serious we are about keeping the Squad, we have waived the fee the Guard traditionally pays us and have offered to dedicate more than 73 acres of additional buffer to the National Guard. We sent a contingent to Washington to speak before the Pentagon and Governor Pataki has accepted my invitation to tour the facility in March. While he's here, we will pitch the idea of having him site the state's new Homeland Security Training Center right here at Gabreski.

Helping our Businesses Thrive

To further a more business-friendly County, I am developing a new program called EZ Business in Suffolk County based on legislation I introduced in 2000. This program will bring our business processes into the 21st Century by incorporating state-of-the-art, high-tech concepts into our daily interactions with the public. Next week, I will sign an executive order requiring every department head to report to me within 30 days all of the forms, applications and payment methods that can be placed on the Internet. Residents should be able to file applications and pay fees with the click of a mouse. And the status of one's application should be easily tracked by accessing the proper database.

Appointing an Information Czar

We have copious amounts of data collected in this county. Unfortunately, it is not centralized. One department doesn't necessarily know what the next has. It's a little like the FBI and CIA having all this information and not talking to each other. There is unlimited potential in

sharing this information, consolidating it, and possibly marketing it. In keeping with our smart government approach, we need an information czar—a chief information officer, whom we will seek to designate shortly.

Red Tape Reduction Program

We recognize that time is money to our business community. Inordinate delays in permit processing means lower revenues for our businesses. As of last fall, we have sped up the permit process significantly, and today, I am announcing a new program called the Red Tape Reduction program that will require Public Works and Health Department officials to meet twice monthly to coordinate an individual's application. We will also invite town officials to meet quarterly with county employees to ensure that one jurisdiction is not delaying the other. We will even conduct pre-application conferences to inform applicants what they need for approval. Our chief information officer will explore the possibility of creating a uniform permit application system, to potentially eliminate the need for an applicant to travel to multiple offices or have to fill out a stack of redundant forms.

Creating Minority Business Incubators

To further economic development, we will create economic incubators to promote the growth of businesses in diverse, economically depressed areas here in Suffolk County. Many upcoming businesses in diverse areas lack the capital to hire secretarial staff or rent large office spaces. We will be able to assist them by providing space to share equipment for copying machines, fax machines, conference rooms and various computer hardware.

An incubator is underway right here in Babylon in nearby North Amityville through a county-town partnership engineered by Supervisor Steve Bellone and the Babylon Town Board. It will serve as our model as the county will donate tax default parcels to not-for-profit organizations in other minority communities as well, and help them obtain low-interest financing to keep rents low for start up businesses. I will be recommending funding assistance of 1.5 million dollars for sewer and water hookups in these zones.

We can also help with personnel through an innovative new program being developed through our Department of Labor called In-Source America. We have developed a public-private partnership whereby unemployed individuals will be retrained to learn computer skills to assist local businesses. Rather than have these private firms outsource these problem solving jobs to countries halfway around the world, we can supply a pool of labor from our unemployment rolls right here in Suffolk to help our local businesses, especially start up minority firms.

We'll also provide seed money to the towns for the planning they are employing to upgrade many of our downtowns in diverse communities, including right here in Wyandanch. The county's downtown revitalization program will dovetail with that of the town to plant trees, erect light posts, improve traffic flow and enhance community pride and identity. We'll do the same in Bay Shore, Huntington Station and Riverhead, for starters.

Bold Thinking for Yaphank Site

We must also continue to look for more visionary ways in which to grow our economy. One vision I hold involves 400 acres of vacant county-owned land in Yaphank. I envision this parcel being divided into three distinct components. The first piece would be reserved for future county needs. On the second, we will explore the possibility of creating a sports, recreation or entertainment facility that is accessible to both highways and the rail system. Within the next few months I will be seeking a request for proposals from sports and entertainment entrepreneurs who would like to do business in Suffolk County at this Yaphank site. Everything will be on the table for consideration, including a sports arena. Will the business community find our Yaphank site attractive? Let's find out. Let's find out if there are entrepreneurs who'd be interested in building an outdoor skating rink or an indoor-pool complex open to the general public. The possibilities for the property are endless. We have already seen that the building of a minor league ballpark bolstered our economy and our local pride when our Long Island Ducks won the Atlantic League championship last year. Tonight we are delighted to have with us team owner Frank Boulton and co-owner Bud Harrelson.

For the final piece of this property, we should again think boldly. We know that companies are finding it harder and harder to attract and retain employees. So, I propose that we reserve this land for a unique workforce housing community of more than 1,000 units, some of which can be sold or leased to companies that are looking to move to or expand here in Suffolk County. This employer-assisted workforce housing community would be of mixed use, including a large daycare center for residents and county employees in the Yaphank corridor and perhaps an office incubator to foster the development of cleaner, alternative energy sources to run the complex. I will be reaching out to the community, the town and the private sector to further shape the scope of this proposal with our county Planning Department. This and our other economic development proposals have the potential to create thousands of construction jobs for our Suffolk residents.

Addressing Minority Issues

Creating New Minority Health Bureau

We have sought to ensure that our County government reflects the diverse population it serves. We are proud of our appointment of Dr. Brian Harper, the County's first-ever African American Commissioner of Health. At Dr. Harper's request, I will be establishing a Bureau of Minority Health to provide an unprecedented level of attention to enhancing health care access for our underserved minority populations.

We have also appointed Reverend Beresford Adams of the First Baptist Church in Gordon Heights as the very first minority liaison to the Commissioner of Police to foster better police-minority relations. We are advancing minorities even further within our police department by promoting Deputy Inspector Ty Mojica to Inspector, making him the highest-ranking Latino in the history of the department. Moreover, we'll be elevating Inspector Donna Engle to Deputy Chief, the first woman to achieve that position in Suffolk. I take equal pride in the very first judicial appointment I made--Toni Bean, of Amityville--who is the only African-American female judge residing in Suffolk.

Enhancing Public Services

Drawing New Bus Routes

We needed to watch our pennies last year, which is why we stressed innovation and efficiency. Our smart government approach enabled us to balance the budget while still maintaining our commitment to providing important human services. While in previous years not-for-profit contract agencies that care for the underprivileged were the first to be cut, we provided a cost-of-living increase for these groups last year. And health care advocates will be happy to know that our efforts to re-open a health care center in the Bay Shore area are moving forward. Very soon, we will announce our recommendation of a specific site for this facility. Additionally, we freed up money to actually increase service on some of our bus routes, including the S-92 bus on the East End.

This year, I am calling on our Transportation Division to begin redrawing bus routes for the first time in years to adapt to our changing demographics and make the system more efficient. Our buses should go where the people want to go.

Helping our Seniors

We're also maintaining our commitment to seniors. Today, I am happy to announce that we are issuing an RFP for a private pharmaceutical manager to provide discounted drugs to private citizens who will now be able to pool their purchases with purchases the county makes

for its thousands of employees and retirees. The bigger the pool, the bigger the discount, so why not combine the purchasing power of our employees with our Medicaid recipients and with participating citizens as well. The cost for drugs should be lowered for our seniors and the county.

Developing Solutions to Domestic Violence

This past year we revived a family violence task force and raised its profile by moving it from the Department of Social Services to the County Executive's office and carried out its suggestion of hiring the county's first family violence coordinator. I also propose that we explore the creation of a new unit within the Child Support Enforcement Bureau that will aggressively pursue delinquent spouses that are working off the books.

Bi-County Initiatives and Reorganization

Our smart government approach pushes us to think more regionally and less parochially. Our grand vision will be better implemented through an expanded Long Island Regional Planning Board. A bill that is currently before the Legislature calls for the expansion of the board to incorporate a more diverse perspective and more input from County officials.

The concept of regionalization was taken to new heights with the unprecedented bi-county initiative that we are discussing with our neighbors to the west in Nassau County. We are working on a wide variety of shared ventures including buying our computers, paper, gasoline and other products in bulk, and we're even discussing large scale plans such as jointly building a juvenile detention center and entering into an agreement for the use of emergency helicopter service. When it comes to generating good ideas, two heads are better than one.

Addressing Regional Issues

It's easy to forget that just a few short months ago there was concern that we would face major blackouts during the summer of 2004. But we joined forces with the State and LIPA to keep pressure on Connecticut to reactivate the Cross-Sound Cable.

The lawsuit we filed against Connecticut certainly got their attention, as did our threat to initiate litigation if the EPA allows Connecticut's dredged spoils to be dumped in the middle of the Long Island Sound. But perhaps our most noteworthy lobbying effort centered on ensuring that funding for the Army Corps of Engineers' beach restoration study be continued. This study is already 90% complete, but was lacking the last several million dollars to allow us to move on to the next stage. When the federal government cut this funding, we sprung into action, lobbied before United States Senate committees and along with our Senators and local Congressional delegation, helped secure these needed funds.

Finally, an Ethics Director

We should all be proud to finally have funded a Director of Ethics here in Suffolk County. The position was created 17 years ago but has remained vacant ever since. We're the first administration to fill it and we thank the Ethics Commission for their good judgment in appointing former Judge Alfred Lama to the position. I will be asking Judge Lama to prepare a comprehensive set of ethical guidelines for all in County government to follow, complete with seminars for our workforce to commence by June of this year. These ethical guidelines are important because the money we guard is the people's money and we should treat it with the reverence it deserves.

Take the Politics out of Redistricting

The public's confidence in our system will be enhanced even further if we can remove the partisanship and the political self-interest that currently exists with legislative district lines being redrawn by incumbent politicians. Is it any wonder that 95% of incumbents get re-elected when we have those same incumbents drawing the lines to exclude competition? Let's start fresh and give the people a system they can believe in. I propose we create a commission of retired judges and good-government groups to draw these lines so that impartiality, not politics, will prevail.

Honoring our Heroes

Before we go forward we need to look back and honor our residents who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of their country. Seven of Suffolk's finest citizens lost their lives fighting for us in Iraq and Afghanistan. We honor the service and memory of Raheen Tyson Heighter; Jacob Fletcher; Michael J. Esposito; Scott N. Germosen; Ramon Mateo; Peter Hein; and James Pettaway.

Tonight I am unveiling a new Suffolk County Medal of Distinguished Service, which will be reserved only for those who exhibit the utmost heroism. Next week, it will be my honor to present the first of these medals to the families of the fallen, some of whom are here with us today.

In Summary

Together we accomplished a great deal last year, and we have a great deal to look forward to in the upcoming year. We will be pursuing a full agenda of exciting new smart government ideas. They include:

- (1) A bold vision for the County's largest parcel in Yaphank where we will look to build new sports and entertainment complexes and needed employer-assisted workforce housing
- (2) A new EZ business program, where we will introduce a Red Tape Reduction program
- (3) An executive order calling for our forms and applications to be processed online
- (4) New economic development incubators to promote minority businesses and alternative sources of energy
- (5) The appointment of an Information Czar to coordinate data throughout the County for us to share and market
- (6) New plans for future development at Suffolk County's airport
- (7) A good-government proposal that will remove partisan politics from the redrawing of district lines
- (8) Creating a comprehensive set of ethical guidelines for county government.
- (9) A new anti-gang initiative
- (10) Exploring the implementation of a 311 hotline
- (11) Stricter policies on the use of pesticide spraying
- (12) The drawing of new bus routes to reflect changing demographics
- (13) A new Bureau of Minority Health
- (14) A new private and public sector daycare center
- (15) An affordable prescription drug plan
- (16) Expanding Civilianization efforts in the police department

Closing Remarks

We have laid out an ambitious agenda tonight and laid the groundwork for an extraordinarily productive year. I ask my esteemed colleagues in the Legislature to join me in turning our aspirations for a greater Suffolk County and a greater Suffolk County government into reality.

Thank you, good night and God bless Suffolk County.